1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to •[824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. A Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 412 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been A carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the 532 dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

294 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*
** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*
† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*

A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 "The toe nails, the finguh nails, even the scrapins frum the bottom of the foot are all very powuhful.[10] If the doctuh could get any of these frum my enemy, he would mix them in whiskey an make my enemy drink. That is all."

"Would the enemy die or just get sick?"

But the old man was brooding with a faraway look in his eyes and would not answer our question.

"Cunjuh," he said again. "You ask me if I know about these dahk things. I know too well. My wife Hattie had a spell put on uh fuh three long yeahs with a nest of rattlesnakes inside uh. She jus lay theah an swelled an suffuhed. How she suffuhed! Jus like the foam that comes on a snake's mouth when he is hungry, she would foam. But she couldn't eat."

"Did she die of snakes?" we wanted to know.

"No. It was predicted that she would have a spell put on uh to die by fyuh and sho enough one night she was burned to death with the snakes still inside uh."[15]

"But how were the snakes given to her?"

"That I can't tell. She maybe drank them in a little whiskey. But I can't tell."

Nathaniel Lewis' somber gaze had all this time been directed through the open door to his garden. It was a pretty little green inclosure with rustic benches set hospitably about. We commented on the vines and ferns, which showed careful cultivation.

754 "You like my gahden?" Lewis said mournfully. "That's
789 all I can think of, my gahden. Theah's a bush out theah
• 824 that's goin to protect me frum any othuh enemies.[24] Nobody can cunjuh me now because of that bush. If only I'd had a little piece of that plant befo, Hattie would be alive an me well an strong. But I kept puttin off goin to get a piece. You have to go to the woods in the dahk of night an find it faw yuhself. If you get caught at sunrise in those woods, you can't get out till night again. You plant a piece of the

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

"I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

* *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824 four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). A He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). A One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest
775 shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed
[115 to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*

A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

"Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July." [20]

We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[45] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and resembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

757 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh
• 824 stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs pre-
[784] vailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[84] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat
[829] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad
[825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause
[826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah
[825] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon.

754 "Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root
759 man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix. Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step," [54a] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried." [1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Darien

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10] an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an (825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50] (789) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

787 We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

"Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs 484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an 789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an 787 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane 534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh (535) alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up (281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight (237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis." She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use •824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it. It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll 535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
HN23 Sea Islanders HN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

735 433 236 439 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a living. Anything they could do to make a living.

They used to gather moss--this same moss. Every month a man came along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 342 354 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything--cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 342 354 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape--outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 453 442 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all over the island. They used carts and that little tacky--pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

Rev. G. C. Brown

722 WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors--didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Joe Deas

I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

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226

Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286]
[227]
[824]

I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

[432]
[434]

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word swanga as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New
252 Orleans), *benne* [46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
191 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?" [47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
191 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

175 It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
567 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
(192) the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.